

THE ROCKVILLE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION FY 2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FY 2012 GOALS

July 2011

Introduction

The Mayor and Council established the Environment Commission in a resolution dated October 28, 2002. Its predecessor, the Science, Technology and the Environment Commission was established in 1985 and continued until it was reorganized into the Environment Commission. The Environment Commission is pleased to present its FY 2011 Accomplishments and its FY 2012 Goals to the Mayor and Council, City staff and the citizens of Rockville. We have organized our submission to reflect our own organizational structure:

Overall Environment Commission Activities Sustainable Design and Energy Committee Actions Watershed Committee Actions Outreach Committee Actions

The Committees were established in 2007 to meet the growing workload of the Commission, and to broaden the network of experts supporting the Commission's activities. The scope of interest for the three committees is based on topics endorsed or requested by the Mayor and Council, projects and priorities identified by City staff, community input solicited during Commission-sponsored events, and Commission's own agenda. Each Committee is comprised of at least two Commissioners as well as community volunteers who either live or work in the City. Recruitment for these committees is done on an ongoing basis and no restrictions exist at this time on the number of volunteers per committee.

Accomplishments of FY 2011 (July 2010 - June 2011)

Overall Environment Commission Activities

- Actively participate in the City's White Tailed Deer Management Task Force. Endorsed the recommendations in the final report to the Mayor and Council.
- Together with the Mayor and Council, presented the 2011 Environmental Excellence Awards to worthy residents and businesses. The awards included the *Carl Henn Award for Outstanding Individual Environmental Achievement*, an award for *Outstanding Environmental Education and Academic Achievement*, and for *Outstanding Leadership in Environmental Practices*.
- Judged the annual Earth Day Environmental Photo Contest. There were 46 photos entered in four age categories. The winning photos were displayed at City Hall and other locations around the City.

- Participated in two multi-city meetings of the Environment Commissions of Annapolis, Bowie, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Hyattsville and Laurel. Rockville hosted the meeting in October 2010 (at the Croydon Creek Nature Center) and Gaithersburg hosted a meeting in April 2011.
- Toured the Rockville drinking water plant.
- Unsuccessfully applied for \$25,000 in grant funding from AOL to enhance efforts to promote recycling.
- Actively recruited applicants to fill five vacancies on the Environment Commission (there are 9 Commissioners).

Watershed Committee Actions

- Reviewed and commented on the Water Resources Element of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan developed by the Environmental Management staff. The document addresses drinking water, wastewater and stormwater capacity anticipated over the next 30 years. Testified in support of adoption of the document before the Mayor and Council in December 2010.
- Held a fall and spring clean-up event at the Maryvale Creek segment adopted by the Commission. The goal of the program is to keep the waterway *trash-free*. The Commission collected 26 bags of trash during the two events.
- Reviewed and commented on the draft Cabin John Watershed Assessment prepared by KCI Technologies, Inc. Participated in a public meeting in the Mayor and Council chambers to discuss the Draft Cabin John Watershed Assessment.
- Assisted in recruiting volunteers for the adopt-a-stream and stream monitoring programs.
- Publicized the *Drug Take Back* Program that the police conducted in September 2010. The program provides an outlet for the proper disposal of expired or unneeded prescription drugs, thereby preventing abuse by children and water pollution caused by flushing the material down a home toilet or faucet drain.
- Assisted with the *Save Our Streams* volunteer water monitoring event in April 2011.
- Attended and helped present the Rockville *Invasive Plant ID and Water Chemistry Training* at Croydon Creek Nature Center. Participated in a community *garlic mustard* invasive species pull.

Sustainable Development and Energy Committee Actions

- Assisted with a residential energy efficiency seminar held in January 2011.
- Promoted and assisted with a residential green power seminar in March 2011
- Reviewed and commented on proposed implementation forms and documents associated with the green building ordinance (Chapter 5 of the City Code) adopted in late FY 2010.
- Working with the Rockville Chamber of Commerce, developed a proposal for a high performance green building tax credit incentive. Advocated for the incentive several time in testimony before the Mayor and Council.
- Encouraged the City staff to participate in the U.S. EPA's Green Power Community Challenge.

Community Outreach and Education Committee Actions

- Renamed and bestowed the Environmental Achievement Award to Carl Henn in memory of his passing. Also recommended to the Mayor and Council that the Millennium Bike Trail be renamed in Mr. Henn's memory.
- Sent a letter to the Maryland Department of Education successfully encouraging the adoption of an environmental literacy program as a minimum high school graduation requirement.
- Designed and purchased recycling magnets that identify the unexpected items that can be recycled in Rockville (e.g., empty aerosol cans).
- Designed and purchased two large tablecloths displaying the City's sustainability logo to be used at future outreach event booths.
- Participated in Science Day and Hometown Holidays. The booths focused on recycling and energy efficiency tips for residents
- Analyzed the City's environmentally-related webpages and made suggestions for content and style improvements.

Environment Commission Goals for FY 2012

Conduct a Vigorous Environmental Education Campaign

- Continue to participate in *Science Day* and *Hometown Holidays* as well as other important City or neighborhood-sponsored community events. Consider getting involved with *Rotary Runfest*, weekly Farmers Markets, the Thursday Night Summer Concert Series, *Wine Fest* or the Car Show.
- Focus outreach on topics including: maximizing recycling, increasing residential energy efficiency, encouraging alternative energy generation and home composting.
- Educate homeowners on the technical and financial aspects of home solar panel installation.
- Improve energy efficiency and water conservation practices in residential and commercial buildings.
- Develop a green map of Rockville (with *LEED* buildings, *Energy Star* buildings, solar installations, etc.).
- Solicit and evaluate environmental excellence award nominations.
- Distribute a recycling *reminder* magnet that describes unique recycling opportunities available to Rockville residents. Target neighborhoods that are not recycling as much as others.
- Draft and distribute an energy and sustainability tip calendar. Consider using photos from the Earth Day photo contest.
- Draft *Rockville Reports* articles on recycling, water quality and stormwater issues.

Engage Others in Sustainability and Environmental Matters

- Continue to advise the Mayor and Council and City staff on energy efficiency, renewable energy, green buildings, watershed management and stormwater issues. Develop a proposed policy on the application of winter-storm road salts.
- Participate in the next round of building code amendments [including evaluating the IgCC (International Green Construction Code) and *Energy Star* certified as optional performance paths].
- Review the proposed protocol for seeking a high performance building tax credit.
- Provide guidance and support for the City to seek certification as a Sustainable Maryland community.
- Review and comment on the draft Environmental Element of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.
- Consider sponsoring a contest to see which building can reduce the most electricity use.
- Consider recommending the City establish energy benchmarks and reporting requirements.
- Together with City staff in Environmental Management and Code Enforcement, pursue adoption of an anti-graffiti ordinance into City Code Chapter 5.
- Continue to improve the sustainability and environmental content of the City website and consider how social media vehicles can be used to reach out to the public.

Strengthen Working Relationships

- Plan a day-long strategic retreat facilitated by Environmental Management personnel to focus the Commission's priorities for the next several years.
- Continue to work with the Environmental Commissions of Annapolis, Bowie, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Hyattsville and Laurel.

Improve Commissioner's Understanding of the City

- Identify and prioritize budget needs early in the City's fiscal year.
- Reach out to other City Boards and Commissions sharing a common interest.
- Tour the Montgomery County Transfer Station (where refuse and yard waste are taken for disposal or reuse).

Recruit Additional Talent to the Commission

- Fill the Commission vacancies and recruit additional volunteers for the Outreach Committee, the Watershed Committee and the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee.